

Rainbow Ring by GalekhXigisi

Series: [Menstrual fics \[3\]](#)

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Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Boris Pavlikovsky, Eddie Kaspbrak, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Hanlon, Mike Wheeler, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

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Summary:

Richie's life through coming out to the Losers Club and eventually dating them.

1. Chapter 1

Autumn blooms over the small town of Derry. The boy with far too much jewelry can only frown as leaves crunch beneath his feet. He's not exactly sure when he adapted into his daily routine. Maybe it was when Eddie had mentioned he thought rings were nice. Maybe it was when Beverly made a joke that she actually really did like the skull ring Richies' cousin had sent him after he realized his fingers were too big for it. Either way, Boris had been beyond pleased when he heard that Richie actually really did like the ring, to which he sent even more over, all patterned with their own little spark. His mom had laughed and said, *You look like that, oh, what's it called. Honey, haven't they been saying grunge nowadays?* Maybe it just gave him something to fidget with during class.

The rings clatter against each other, the unhappy crunching of leaves settling beneath the fifteen-year-olds' feet. He has a tattoo now, thanks to a trip where Boris had visited with Mike. The three cousins (*"The unholy-holy trinity," Stan had joked.*) had gone out of town, fixed up with what had been three matching tattoos, all of which were some form of water-based animal. Boris had gotten a black clownfish on his hip (*Richie had no idea why*), Mike had gotten a seahorse around his wrist and forearm, and Richie had gotten a squid along his hand. His parents were *livid* at seeing the teenager come home three days later, laughing with his cousins as they trotted around. He had only been fourteen then, but at least he got enough compliments from random people at school over it.

No one had questioned the sets of three when they all looked like triplets then. When Mike and Boris had presented their cards, the tattoo artist hadn't even asked for Richies'. Richie had pointedly decided never to ask the two how they had found the place of known that they would somehow not get carded. He has a feeling it has to do with Mikes' freaky ass girlfriend. He never voiced that, though. He never voiced how in the fuck he looked so much like them when they were both older than he was, either.

It's cold now. Richie can't say he doesn't like the cold. He likes it better than he likes the too-hot summers where his binder feels tight and he has to hold back everything in his power to keep from just locking himself away for most of it. He absolutely *thrived* around his shithead friends, not that they couldn't deduce that themselves. Being alone meant he had all his thoughts to himself, that he would be able to just *exist* with every single burrowing issue that planted itself in his brain. Thankfully, their clubhouse-bunker-whatever was cool during the summers and no one cared if he just sat in his underwear and a shirt after swimming, so he settled with the losers without issue.

The cold meant Richie could wear as many hoodies and pile up as thickly as he wanted without prying eyes. He could wear a too-small sports bra and hoodies while still being able to breathe. It meant his parents wouldn't dote on him about his binder and make him take it off the instant he got home. Sure, that was mostly his father that doted him, but *still*. He didn't have to hide as much when the cold invades with its sudden chill.

He slips his hands into his pockets. He had on a bunch of rings, a bunch of random ones he had been given by Boris, Mike, and Mike's girlfriend, El. There was one on his thumb that he rarely ever wore. It wasn't that he didn't like it, no, he absolutely *adored* it. Eleven had picked it out for him during one of her visits without Mike. She had said she just wanted a day away from him, so she had brought her friend Max and the three had left the city for a day. It had been refreshing and Richie now treated the ring like it was a treasure brought back from a pirates' adventure instead of something the three had stolen from the store while Richie wooed the girl at the counter and the two girls had nabbed more than just a few handfuls of jewelry and made their escape. Well, at least Richie could've said he got his first kiss out of that experience, but the girl had thought he was a lesbian so it wasn't very much of an achievement on his end, not that he'd tell the losers club that. It was practically the same

thing as a pirates' adventure.

The rainbow ring seems to be burning at his skin now, though. He knows it's not *actually* burning his skin, no. He had made sure there was no nickel in it. After his mothers' attempt at earrings and the horrid realization that Richie was severely allergic to the metal at only the age of seven months, they had all decided to discard the metal altogether in the household. It feels like it's too much weight. It isn't. He wore heavier rings all the time, especially with a bracelet-ring thing that had a spider on it. He always wore it when he was annoyed with Stan or Eddie. It seemed to piss them off and get the gist enough.

The only difference now is that he's on his way to see the rest of the losers.

He would be seeing them dressed in the same all-black ensemble that Max had chosen because *Holy shit, dude, you look like Boris*. They had laughed then, but the dress-shirt, slacks, and heavy trench coat now seemed to be grounding him to reality. He felt like he was floating on nerves. It's not the best feeling, if he's being honest. Yeah, no, it was pretty bad and he didn't like it all that much.

He wishes he had his bike. It would make the trek there a lot shorter. It certainly would make him feel a lot less like he was taking too long. It wouldn't exactly make the last ten minutes it took to actually walk there any shorter, no, but he couldn't find it in himself to care. He's more focused on the lump in his throat and the ache in his chest. It feels tight, but he knows it isn't the binder. He's in a sports bra. His allergies were already killing him and the leaves were only *just* beginning to fall. Then again, he was walking through a fucking *forest*, of course, it was fucking with his allergies.

The walk feels too short but too long all at once. It's this crushing sort of feeling that he doesn't expect. One minutes, he's gracefully unaware of just how close he was, and the next he was tripping over Mike and his bike, stumbling to the ground with both the boy and his bike now on top of him. How he genuinely *flipped* over him was something his mind wasn't sure how to process. He doesn't know what it means or how he did it, but at least he landed with his back against the rock and not his head. He just groans out a somewhat annoyed, "*Goddamn it.*" He's not annoyed with Mike or his bike, he's annoyed with himself. How long had he been zoned out that this had become his go-to place?

"You okay," Mike asks, moving away from the other to stand up. Richie just offers a halfhearted glare at the boys' bike as he stands. "Got it, got it," the other replies.

Ben must've been walking with Mike since the boy is there to help both of them up. And, of fucking *course*, he instantly supplies, "Hey, that's a pretty ring." he points at the rainbow one. It has four missing gemstones, not that it's too noticeable with the large array of gems surrounding it. "Did you just get it? I've never seen you wear it before."

Richie ignores the way his cheeks heat. The fact that he's never seen it on Richie must've meant the boy somewhat kept track of the rings he *did* wear. "No, uh, just never worn it out." That was a lie. He wore it on a necklace every single time he saw Mike or his friends. "Me, El, 'n' Max got it when they were in town on my fourteenth."

"She was over when you got out of the hospital," Mike more asks than states.

“Yeah, but we ditched town for a couple of days after they finally cleared my medicine and health shit.” Unlike Eddie, he had actually be admitted for actually dying, just one of the rare bullshit cases where birth control fucked him over.

Ben nods. “Was it in the stuff you guys stole?”

“Maybe,” Richie smirks. The Losers Club never actually knew if Richie was genuine or not about the times he bragged about stealing shit. He was so full of shit all the time that it was rather hard to dissect truth from fiction and he would never clear it up. “So, what’s got you two late from coming to this little club meeting Bev called?”

“We’re not *that* late,” Mike insists.

“Seventeen-ish minutes, bud.”

“How’d you know?”

“Because I passed that damn city clock on the way here.” No one liked the bell-set clock. It was new and far too loud for everyone. Kids had already started vandalizing it, despite having to actually *walk through* the church to get through it.

Ben raises a brow. “But that doesn’t explain how you know how long-”

“I count each footstep,” he replies in a quick snap. It’s not that much of a snap, honestly, more so just letting the other know. He wasn’t going to tell the two any of the habits he knew he had. It was a thing he learned growing up. Keep track of how long it took him to get home, always try to make it shorter, it makes him less likely to get caught in the crossfire. “When I count steps, it also gets minutes and I go from there, okay?”

“Why?”

“Just a habit,” he grumbles, making his way forward, hands shoved in his pocket. It’s not some form of teenage angst, nor was it annoyance.

It was his nerves, if he were being honest. He would get snappy when his nerves got the better of him, either angry or quick with a joke, but never in between. He never settled. He would bounce his leg ninety miles a minute, *sure*, that just came with ADHD and *Richie himself*, but this was something different. He shouldn’t even be nervous about it, about this meeting or the fucking *ring*. It’s a God damn ring and it’s fucking *Beverly*. He wasn’t scared of her. She was sweet and shared her cigarettes and helped him steal whatever the fuck it was he wanted, and he the same with her. They had always been two peas in a pod, for the most part. They bonded over getting snagged in the deadlights (*that’s what Mike had called them and it had stuck rather easily since they were basically dead then*) and wouldn’t dare actually *speak of it*, not to anyone in Derry, at least. Bev had talked to her aunt about it and Richie went to El and Will about it.

Neither of the boys comment as Richie makes his way down to their little lair.

2. Chapter 2

Stanley frowns as he runs his eyes over Richie. As of current, he was arguing with Eddie over the hammock, just like the two *always* did. It always ended the same, one of them squishing their selves into the other, laying beside each other with feigned annoyance. More often than not, Eddie would try to get the others' attention some way or another. Sure, the group gave him a lot of shit sometimes, but Stan really did like this version of Richie better than the "*original*." The original was never the original, no, but it was the one Stan knew first. He didn't like Richie back then.

Richie back then wasn't even Richie, if Stan were honest. It was the seven-year-old who still had an accent the same as his cousins', with the last name to match, simply *Pavlikovsky*. Well, Stan shouldn't say *simply*. No, it took him almost two years to learn how to spell it. And, by then, Richie had changed his name. Then, his name was Tozier instead and everyone in school was calling him *Trashmouth* because he cussed out a teacher in some language Stan didn't know back then. Now, he's pretty sure it was Russian, but he was never actually sure.

He had remembered staying the night when Richie was eight years old. Richie had lit his adoption papers on fire, yelling, "*Good luck trying to return me without the receipt, assholes,*" to his parents while they frantically tried to put out the fire he had started in the living room. Then, Stanley hadn't understood. He had his family, his parents. White, suburban, Jewish parents that weren't actually that bad. Richie hadn't exactly had that, not for the first few years of his life. He hadn't gotten out of that until his eighth birthday when his parents had resented the (now nothing more than ashes) adoption papers. They had to go through townhall and the states' capital to get another copy.

Stanley scans them over with his eyes, not exactly angry but not exactly happy, either. He feigned annoyance the same way Richie and Eddie did. He turned to the others. Ben was trying to explain how he had miraculously wired up electricity to their clubhouse. He was at least trying, which seemingly made Beverly take in more of the *it's the thought that counts* side of it. Mike and Bill were idly chatting about God knows what, but they seemed to be calm as Hell, enjoying each others' attention.

He's worried about Richie. He's pretty sure Richie knows he's worried about him, too. Stanley was never exactly the most subtle when it came to his worry over his friends. Hell, he would even say he would happily kill himself over the possibility that it could protect them, even if it was only for a day alone. Sure, he'd admit that, but he'd never admit that he felt something a little stronger than *friendship* towards the group. Yeah, no, he'd rather die than do that. Richie had once joked that if he were to die over liking someone, he'd at least put it in the suicide note. Stanley had punched him for the comment.

"How many minutes is it, Stan," Eddie suddenly yells at the teenager currently unsure of what to do or say.

"What?"

"How many minutes are we allowed to sit in the hammock before we have to share," he reiterates, somewhat annoyed, though Stanley isn't sure if he genuinely means it or not.

He rolls his eyes at their antics, Eddie's socked foot against Richie's cheek, his glasses flung somewhere, probably near the ground. He would need help finding them later if he hadn't taken them off himself. "You two argue about this every single day."

Richie rolls his eyes in return, angrily supplying, "Eddie started it! He always does!"

He gives the others' foot a shove with his arm, though it knowingly isn't actually genuine, nothing more than the swipe of an arm and shove away. There would never be a bruise left on him, not when his mother was still around. While they still fought consistently, Richie knew better than to piss off Misses Kaspbrak once again, not after the last time when Maggie and Wentworth took the butt of Sonia's anger because *your boy's too mean to mine, he's gonna get him killed! He already broke his arm with that slut, Beverly! Do you know your little shit is hanging out with a slut?* Sure, Maggie hadn't always been on the best of terms with her son, but she had raised *all types of Hell* that day, screaming at Sonia until her voice was gone and her husband held her back from clawing out the womans' eyes purely out of anger.

"Why can't you two just settle on it?"

"Where's the fun in that, Stan the man," Richie asks in a tone Stanley recognizes.

"Whatever. Richie, can I talk to you for a minute?"

"My spot!"

"You can sit back with him when you get back! You always do!"

Richie sneers, though there's no genuine anger or disgust behind it, far more mocking than anything as he repeats a sarcastic, "*You always do.*" He stands up with a glare. "I don't *always!*"

"Bullshit," Beverly calls from behind them with a smirk of her own, watching with stars in her eyes as Ben lets out a laugh. "You really always do, Rich."

"Shut up. Stan, I'm not going to hold your hand while you take a piss, we're not kids anymore. And we're not pulling out to compare, either. I'm *clearly-*"

"Beep beep, Trashmouth," Stan groans in reply as he starts making his way up the ladder. Richie begrudgingly follows, grumbling the entire way up. Sure, Stan talked about him being annoying all the time, but he never actually did mind the words. In fact, it was much better than that silent shell of a child he used to know. He likes this a million times more.

"What's got your panties in a bunch, Stan?"

"Nothing," the other replies with a frown, "but I know you're upset. You haven't stopped bouncing your legs and you keep making jokes and insulting everyone. You're even fighting with Eddie more and didn't stop him from pulling me into it like you normally do."

"Of course, you would notice that, you fuckin' dork."

Stan's brows furrow, raising half-heartedly at the same time. "Stop trying to distract me, Richie! I *know* you're upset!"

"My bad for having anxiety over the fact that I'm going to be staying the night Beverly in front of everyone. There's no guarantee I'll wake up in time to change and we both know I can't sleep in any sort of binding, you know I cracked my ribs last week with Bowers' asshole friends."

"They have names, you know."

Richie rolls his eyes, tapping his foot impatiently as he folds his arms over his chest, an action Stanley recognizes, the self-conscious decision he almost always did when anything near his general transition in the least. He always did it, no matter what. "Like they fucking deserve it," he grumbles, words much softer.

Richie had changed a lot since the hours they had fought Pennywise. He wasn't sure what Richie had seen that sparked on his anger to suddenly want to fight that clown tooth and nail, nor what he had seen in the deadlights that made him twice as angry, but he had changed so much more than he wanted to let on. Stanley never knew what or why any of that was happening, but he silently hoped this new timid look he had every single time he got anywhere close to being emotional was nothing more than a few years of needed recovery. Then again, Beverly had spoken about the deadlights with generally no hitch while Richie had screamed at Eddie for even bringing it up, so he at least had an idea.

"Look, I'm not sure what we can do, but your parents love Bev and she knows they'd never say no to letting you stay with her."

"I know that, Curly Q."

"So, we do what we can do."

"Fake my death? Shatter my arm?"

"No, dipshit. You go to sleep last and I'll wake up first so I can get you up in time to wake you up so you don't have to worry about getting caught."

"You're playing sacrificial lamb?"

"Or you could tell them and get it over with. You know none of them will care."

Richie snickers. "You've got no guarantee on that, pretty boy."

"Won't know until we find out."

Richie straightens. "We won't find out."

"Richie."

His eyes widen, brows raised and arms out to his side, head shaking a small bit as he leans his chest forward, a look that strikes Stanley as something similar to *Do you want to fight?* “Stan, *no.*”

“If only a couple of them are upset, the others can convince them otherwise.”

“No, Stan! This is different! This isn’t wearing a rainbow ring and telling your friends that you like it up the ass!”

Stan’s own brows widen. “Where the Hell did that come from?” He runs a hand through his hair. “You know how the others are, they won’t *care.*”

“But what if they *do?*”

“Then we convince them otherwise and beat them up if they say anything else.”

“No.”

“Why *not?*”

“Because I can’t deal with them saying they don’t accept it, *okay?* I’ve lost enough family again and again! I’m not going to lose this bullshit

losers club when things are finally doing somewhat okay!”

Stanley freezes up, surprise invading his core. *Oh.*

“I don’t want them to call me a sissy or throw my shit out! I don’t want to be put back where I was! I don’t want to see that disappointed look my mom gave me when I told her! I don’t want to have to depend on Boris for the same shit I had to depend on when I was young!” His nails dig into his palms, tears seemingly welling up in his eyes. “We were just kids and what we had to do was *bullshit*, okay? I finally have friends after *years* of it just being you, Boris, Mike, and their friends, okay? I can’t just lose that after fighting a fucking *clown* for you shitheads, okay?”

Richie grits his teeth. It’s clear he wants to say a million different things, but he just glares at the moon, arms wrapping around himself, tight and somewhat secure. The large hand motions that Stan hadn’t even noticed he was doing paused as he bit his tongue, refraining from telling the words he wants to.

“Richie,” he meekly tries, brows furrowed. He runs his eyes up Richie, only just taking notice of the rainbow ring on his thumb. He hadn’t noticed it earlier, but it now shimmered in the gentle light illuminating them.

“I’m going home,” the boy grumbles, voice somewhat shot as he grits his teeth.

Stanley frowns. “Do you want me to get your jacket?”

“No, no.” He shakes his head, taking a deep breath, one far too shaky for it to be calm. “Just... Have someone bring it to the sleepover tomorrow so my mom doesn’t have an aneurysm because I lost another one, especially one from Boris.”

“I’m sorry,” Stanley mumbles as the other turns.

“That’s okay, Stan. I’m gonna call Boris when I get home. We haven’t talked in forever.”

Stanley leaves out the gentle *That’s a lie*. He knew the other called him just two days ago, the two talking until his mom had to use the phone. Instead, he comments a gentle, “Okay. Get home safe, Trashmouth.”

“You, too, Stan the Man.” He gives a two-finger salute before slipping into the forest, leaving Stanley alone, the cold seeping the warmth from his bones.

It takes him a few minutes to convince himself to go back down. The instant he’s down there, the group is asking what in the Hell the two were fighting about. Stan doesn’t even justify them with an answer.

Notes for the Chapter:

Have I watched *The Goldfinch* yet? Not at fucking all, unfortunately. Am I getting Boris' "character" wrong? Probably.

3. Chapter 3

Beverly honestly didn't think everyone would be able to stay at her house on such short notice. She knew Ben had to practically *beg* his family to be able to stay, especially *with a girl*. However, they had caved when they realized the rest of the Losers' Club would be there. They weren't strict, no, not really, they just didn't exactly want any more children in the family. Beverly couldn't blame them.

She really didn't think Richie would be able to make it. The boy came over all the time, sure, but staying the night was a whole different thing. From what she understood, his parents were somewhat strict and usually didn't exactly like him going out that much. She was never sure why, but she knew he typically got yelled at when he got home if the times her aunt had dropped him off were a vindictive sample. From what she knew about the family, Richie only ever stayed with Stan, the "*religious*" one, the family friend after years of going to church together and Richie being so damned close to the boy. She had never, not once, seen him stay anywhere else, not even Bill, who always made sure his dad was gone before Richie even stepped near the house. She never understood why, but at least the boy got along with the rest of the clan.

She knew Eddie snuck out. He always did, but a lot of that had to do with the fact that he had started sneaking out purely with the intent to piss his mom off at some point. Sonia had gone beyond just getting on his nerves and it had ended in Eddie spiting her constantly, to which Richie never stopped offering praise. He preened the group, even if he constantly refused to admit so.

They had found out that spin the bottle wasn't exactly fun when the bottle kept landing on Richie and the boy was beyond ecstatic to make out with anyone in the group, though he absolutely refused to go along with seven minutes in heaven, so they had essentially

discarded a lot of the many ideas that followed. Eddie couldn't get any sort of injury and they had to accommodate to everyone's boundaries and such. She was fine respecting them, just like the others were. She wasn't that much of a prick. As it seemed, nor were the others, especially after Richie had snapped about it.

Stan had fallen asleep at some point, followed by Ben, Eddie, and Mike, leaving only Beverly, Bill, and Richie to converse, albeit quieter than they had been earlier since Eddie was an absolute *bitch* when he first woke up. They didn't want to deal with the sleepy boy's anger. It wasn't worth it, no matter how hilarious it was to see Richie get chased by a teenager with the weight of string bean. Bill looked close to falling asleep, eyes half-lidded and yawns leaving his mouth every few minutes.

"So," Beverly asks, lips curling into a smirk, "how about a game of truth or dare?"

Bill smiles widely, supplying a quick, "S - Sure, Bev."

Richie, however, seemed to have gone pale, hands in front of himself as he made a large X, shaking his head. "No," he grounds out, firm and somewhat aggravated.

"What, Richie, you scared?"

Richie flicks her off. "Of course, I'm not fucking scared of a *game*."

“Then why won’t you play it?”

He seems to freeze up once again, face scrunched up in a grimace-like expression, though it vaguely crossed over into a sneer and harsh cringe. She could see the cogs turning, trying to come up with a reason to tell them no, to prove that he wasn’t scared of a game made for children.

“Y - You are, are - aren’t you?”

“That not your Goddamn business, Bill.”

Bill throws his arms up, eyes shut but relaxed as he smiles passively. “My bad - ad.”

Beverly puckers her lips, squinting as she leans in front of Richie, head cocked to the side as she tries to look him up and down, scanning him over. She can’t tell what’s eating him up, so she softly changes her approach. “You know... if you don’t want to play, that’s fine, we just want to know *why* you don’t want to play.”

Richie raises a brow. “Just why?”

They nod.

“So, after I tell you, you two won’t keep asking about it.”

“S - Swear it,” Bill replies, Beverly instantly repeating the two words.

“Fine, fine.” He waves his hands in front of himself, dismissing them with the gesture. He looks at his lap, not focused on them as he slowly starts, “Well... When, back when...” he purses his lips, humming slowly.

Beverly frowns. She can’t remember a time that Richie was so timid, that he didn’t burst at the seams with happiness. In fact, the only times she had ever seen him anywhere *close* to this was after the had gotten back together and when someone scared or yelled at Richie. As they had all found, jump scares of any kind were not the boys; forte and oftentimes made him panic far more than anything else. She pauses, trying to take in every single word he provides.

“Pennywise, that stupid clown... He wanted to play Truth or Dare, know my *dirty little secret*.” He smiles, though he seems to fold in on himself. “Shame he never got to know I fucked his mom, huh,” he asks, smirking at the other.

Bill frowns. “I’m so - so - sorry, Rich.”

“That’s okay, Bill. You couldn’t know.” He smiles, waving it off once more before suggesting some different “party” game. He’s quick to tell jokes and place distractions, but any form of *anything else* made him instantly switch the subject, skirting around the topic with such an elegance that she was sure he had don’t it before. Beverly doesn’t ask, doesn’t pry. Instead, she slowly accepts that she’s not going to get any other explanation, especially not from the boy snapping at her to see if she’s still away.

That’s how Beverly falls asleep, Richie snapping his fingers in front of her, asking, “*You still awake, Bev? Slacker, falling asleep so early.*” She ignores that Ben and the others are asleep, too.

She doesn’t see Richie struggling out of his binder, wheezing his way through the fabric. Instead, her eyelashes flutter close and she sleeps without a single dream disturbing her rest.

Notes for the Chapter:

Short chapter because I wanted my exact overall word count to be 420,690. Happy roughly two years on AO3, shitheads!!!!



4. Chapter 4

Beverly yawns, the noise squeaking out of her as she progressively leans up, bones popping accordingly. Honestly, she wasn't at all surprised by the series of crackles. She had slept with her back off of the catch, the top half of her slunk over and passed the fuck out. It was far from a good sleeping position, especially as it left her body aching. She could handle, though, as it wasn't *that* bad, she was just being dramatic.

There came a sudden whine that makes her perk up. It isn't coming from her. No, no, she hadn't made a sound since she had yawned, just wiping the sleep out of her eyes. Instead, she hears muffled words, ones far too muffled by the walls. But she knows it's coming from the bathroom. She had spent enough time locked away in there to know where every sound was always coming from. She could pinpoint everything down to the drop of a pen, though, in this group of rejects, it wasn't exactly an uncommon talent. She had seen Eddie's sense of smell. Now *that* was a genuine talent that they couldn't compare to. Then again, in a house that almost always smelled like antiseptic and a harsh lack of dust, anyone would have a nose desperate to catch a whiff of *literally* anything else, preferably something that didn't make his sinuses burn.

She stands up, keeping herself centered more towards the walls. Her footsteps were less likely to creak as she moved, a tactic she had picked up from Richie when he had told her after she had gotten caught sneaking out once. Her aunt hadn't exactly *cared*, but Richie had still told her, gingerly replying, "*Just in case there's a day where she cares to get mad over it,*" before chiming in with a joke about lord knows what. She didn't exactly remember now when it had happened almost two years ago and their Pennywise pact had just come into effect.

She stalks down the hall, finding the door standing wide open as Richie and Stanley argue, Richie digging through the mirror's cabinet, leaning against the sink as he did so. He bites out an insult, supplying it through grit teeth. He passes a glare to Stan, who looks tired but calm, red on his cheeks as Richie flicks him off. He seemed to be relatively unaffected by the fact that the other was standing just a foot and a half in front of him in nothing more than a towel, glasses slipping down his nose.

Richie angrily whispers, "I'm not fucking waking Bev up to ask her where in the *fuck* she keeps her pads and tampons. That's so *intrusive*."

"You're digging in her cabinets for them, Rich. That's really intrusive," Stanley supplies in reply, yawning the last bit of his words. He doesn't sound agitated, just tired, which Beverly didn't doubt. It was still dark outside and she didn't exactly have a clock on hand to find out the time herself. "I say you just ask her so you can shower and get all that blood off of you."

Blood? Beverly frowns, scanning her eyes over Richie. She doesn't find blood on his front, just what looks like... *Oh*. Richie wasn't having a *nosebleed*, he was simply having his monthly.

"I'd rather *die*, dude," he scoffs, glaring at the mirror as he places both hands on the porcelain of the sink, no longer raiding her cabinets. His face falls into something of a pitiful expression. "I don't get it, Stan," he mumbles, words almost silent. "I'm not even two days into these pills. I took one just before I fell asleep. I couldn't have gotten more than an *hour* of sleep, at best... And I'm *bleeding*. That means this was a natural... a *natural period*." He squeezes his eyes shut, tears falling into the sink. "That's not supposed to *happen*, Stan."

Stan places a gentle hand on his shoulder, calm as he softly supplies, “It’s okay. Your body is probably just trying to get itself on track now that you’ve got a schedule.”

“It’s a mother fucker for showing up while I’m at Bev’s,” he scoffs, bitter.

Beverly doesn’t exactly feel like hiding anymore. Instead, she flips on the lights, not even stunned by Stan’s yelp that follows, one that certainly will have woken up the others. Richie moves behind Stan, holding the towel up and defensively pressing one arm to his chest in an attempt to flatten it while the other hand frantically wipes at his cheeks. In the low light of the bathroom, she couldn’t see how red they were, but there were absolutely *bloodshot*, rimmed with a prominent pink that gave her a knowing tell that he had been crying for a while. He looked far paler than normal, bags beneath his eyes, ones that he definitely didn’t have earlier.

“We don’t have much of either, just a singular small tampon,” she supplies for the two, mostly focused on Richie, “but I can run to the store on the corner and get some. They stay open twenty-four-seven.” Bev keeps her expression calm, something that she feels is far too similar to someone trying to gain the trust of a hurt animal in order to help them. She *hated* the look held on Richie’s face, one far too vulnerable for the boy to ever have. “But we have to go before the morning rush sets in. I’m not sure what time it is-”

“Three,” Stan replies.

“Well, then we’ve really only got an hour and a half. Richie, I’ll get

you the tampon, and then you can shower or whatever it is you need to do. Stan and I'll be back in about fifteen minutes. Is that okay?"

Richie nods, sniffing as he wipes his face again. "Y Yeah, that's actually - that is - that's *perfect*, thanks."

She gives him a smile as she nods. "Okay, Stan, let's go."

Stan moves along without an issue, passing Richie the tampon when Beverly gets it for him. They only tell the rest of the Losers Club that they'll be back soon and that Richie was in the shower ("*Don't run any fucking water, Eddie*") before leaving,

Stan was quiet for a bit, which Beverly finally decided to break when a question popped in her mind, her voice soft as she asks, "So, how long have you known?"

"About Rich," he asks, getting a nod in reply. "Well, since we were kids. Rich's mom is Jewish so we met then and we lived close enough that we were at each others' almost daily."

Beverly nods, smiling softly. "That actually sounds nice." It was a million times nicer than this town could have been on poor Richie. She wasn't sure what Henry would have done if he lived closer to Richie, what he would have done. There were a million possibilities, yet she can't find a singular one that would work out for Richie. She distracts herself by asks, "Does anyone else know?"

“Bill’s dad, his parents, my parents, and us,” the boy supplies, frowning. “I don’t think he would have told you if he could get away with it, but he wouldn’t have told *anyone* if he didn’t have to.”

Beverly frowns, dropping the conversation as they get to the store, slopping in. It’s not the same one with that creepy ass man that Beverly had flirted with again and again to get what she wanted. This was a newer one, one thrown together only a month to that she had been in twice and stolen a handful of things with Richie both times, even somehow getting Bill into it one time and Ben into the other. This time, she had no intent to steal, no, because she doubted Stan would exactly want that. Instead, she walks in and goes straight to the section she knows will hold what she needs.

“Do you know what size Richie is,” she asks, voice lowered enough that it’s almost silent. Sure, she doubts anyone from school or really *anywhere* would be out now, but she could never take her chances, not when there was the prying *maybe*.

“Size?”

“Yeah, just like clothes size.”

“Uh, I don’t know his tampon size, but he usually gets the biggest pads,” Stan offers, face bright red.

“Flow?”

“Heavy.”

Beverly nods, grabbing a box with multiple tampon sizes and a couple different packs of pads, too, some as a *just in case* and the others for herself, the dreaded red bitch that would knowingly attend her soon. She makes her way forward, passing them off to Stan so she can get the money out of her pocket.

Stan puts it all on the counter, holding onto the best neutral expression he can when the cashier smirks and asks, “Your girly starting her monthly?” She older woman doesn’t wait for an answer before supplying, “Such a nice young man, buying his lady supplies.”

“Actually, I’m paying,” Beverly supplies with the nicest smile she can muster up. The woman frowns. She smirks as she supplies, “He’s buying dinner tonight, though, so there’s no harm, no foul.”

The woman rings them up, falling silent after telling them the price. Stan follows as soon as he watches Beverly stomp out of the store.

Notes for the Chapter:

Slight projecting because my body hurts :')

5. Chapter 5

Richie glances over at Beverly, frowning at his friend. She now laid on the floor, curled between Ben and Bill, having passed out the instant she laid back down. She looked a lot more comfortable now. Stan had even thrown a blanket over her so she wouldn't get cold, not that either of them really thought she'd get too cold, to begin with. That girl was a heater and a half, really. He presses into Stan's lap, curling around his best friend as he brings the blanket over the two. Stan loosely wraps his arms around Richie's waist, any other comments discarded as the shorter of the two settles his head between the crook of Stan's neck.

"Thank you," Richie whispers, keeping his voice down as he adjusts the pillows so he and Stan can both lean against the arm of the couch comfortably. Yes, Beverly had some expensive ass furniture, but no, none of it was comfortable. Beverly constantly bitched about it, but her aunt always said it didn't matter because none of the losers ever sat on the furniture right, anyway. That was true, but it never stopped Beverly from having something to say about it.

Stan hums softly, whispering a questioning, "For?"

"Waking me up and staying up with me."

"S'not like I could fall asleep with a hundred-something pound baby in my lap, now can I?" He playfully jabs with a teasing smile.

Richie laughs softly, smiling himself as he cards his fingers through the other's hair. "You could fall asleep standing up, Stan the Man. I doubt me being here is much of an issue, now *is it?*"

“I fell asleep standing *once*, Rich,” Stan retorts. If it weren’t so dark in the living room, Richie would be able to see the blush coating his cheeks, painting them a rosy red. “You were falling asleep in the shower earlier.”

Richie laughs against the other’s neck, smile widening. His cheeks dance with red, too. It wasn’t uncommon for him to be falling asleep in the shower, really, but only Stan knew that because of the two times he had passed out in the other’s shower and went down with a thump. He had been younger, then, and had now learned how to sleep standing up without collapsing. He had, somehow, learned how to do so.

The two fall into a comfortable silence. If not for the fact that Richie was still running his hands through Stan’s hair, the boy would have thought his friend had fallen asleep. It’s a comforting little action that Richie slowly repeats, lulling Stan into a sleepy haze.

“I love you,” Richie whispers quietly.

“I love you, too,” Stanley responds without hesitation, the simple call and response rarely ever getting broken.

Richie shakes his head against the other’s neck. “No, I mean that I *love* you, Stan. Like...” He pulls back, the blanket falling. “I mean, like, I want to *kiss* you sort of love you.”

Stan hums again. His cheeks are bright red, heating up. “Is that so?”

“Very much,” Richie replies.

The taller of the two knows Richie is tense as can be, his nerves jittering and make him clench his teeth in a way he had only seen on the worst of the other's days when his anxiety heightened and he couldn't sit still. “So... You're giving me a love confession after I helped you clean up your own blood, listened to you cry for a few hours, walked to the store at three in the morning, and-”

“I *get it*,” Richie huff, nervously laughing, “if you're going to turn me down, just say it and don't drag me along with it.”

Stanley shakes his head, only then realizing that Richie couldn't actually see it. “Oh, no, I do, very much, want to kiss you, too. I'm just trying to figure out what's so romantic about it that would call for a love confession, especially from you.”

Richie hums, seemingly wanting to consider it, too. He slowly takes into account, “Well, I guess there's a lot of things about it, really. You didn't bitch about it, like, at all, either.” He runs a hand through his own hair, anxiously leaning against the arm of the couch. He's in his pajamas now. He didn't even put them on last night, having just fallen asleep in what he wore the day previous. He's thankful for that now, considering that the clothes he has on now are an obnoxiously bright green print that Mike had gifted him because *I looked at it and it made me want to vomit, so I knew you'd love it*. They most certainly would have been stained and he would have to throw it away.

“That's only one thing.”

The shorter smiles. "You're really pretty, so that's an extra plus."

"That doesn't count for tonight," Stan huffs.

That pries a smile from the Tozier boy. "Yeah, but it's still a plus..." He leans back against the other, relaxing once again. "You did all of this without question, too. I know you don't really like waking up in the middle of the night, no one really does, but you *did* and you volunteered to be the sacrificial lamb, too. And.... Well, I really don't know, but it's super sweet and it really just all makes me want to kiss you."

"Well, then, you should probably kiss me," Stanley decides quickly.

"Really?"

"Really."

"Okay, cool, but I can't see you so can I touch your face?"

"Yeah," Stan replies. Richie's hand softly edges along the other's jaw, easily finding his lips. The kiss comes all too quickly, ending just the exact same. It's sudden and Stan moves a little too quickly so their noses collide. The two immediately fall into a little pit of laughter, keeping their voices down as much as they can. That is until Richie's laughter turns into soft sobs. "Shit, Rich, are you-"

"I'm okay," he quickly forces. Stan can still hear the smile. "S - S'just a lot. I've had a crush on you since we were *kids*, okay?"

"And you had a crush on Eddie and Bill."

"So did you!"

"Never said I didn't," Stan says before hesitantly correcting, "Well, *don't*."

"You still like them?"

"I mean..."

"Okay, okay, that's great because I do, too." Richie nods, sniffing as he wipes his face. "Sorry about crying, though."

"That was my first kiss," Stan redirects.

Stan knows Richie is raising a brow and smirking right now. He can't see him, but he knows his best friend's habits well enough. "Seriously, Stan? Thought you were macking on Bill?"

“No, I gave up on him after he kissed Beverly.”

“Yes, but Ben also kissed Beverly and I very distinctly remember Bill kissing Mike and Ben just last night without being prompted by spin the bottle.”

Stan snorts. “Yeah, they’re probably all dating. Haven’t you kissed Mike before, too, though?”

“Yeah, he kissed me when I was coming out of the deadlights, remember?”

Stan cringes, brows furrowing. “I mean, yeah, I guess that’s what Ben did with Beverly, too.”

Richie nods, agreeing, “Yeah, but they’ve been super in love since we got together as a group, remember? He wrote her a poem and she thought Bill wrote it, which was why she kissed Bill, to begin with.”

“He wrote her a poem? Does this mean she doesn’t love Bill?”

“No, no, she loves Bill, they still make out all the time, but Ben wrote her a poem and since she thought Bill wrote it, she kissed him when we cut our hands open for that pact. But Bill found out about it and confessed that he didn’t actually write it and that someone else did, so Bev asked Mike and Eddie, and they obviously *didn’t*, so Ben finally came forward and said he did, but now they’re kind of all together, I guess.”

Stan groans. “That’s *confusing*, Rich.”

“I know, but it’s pretty romantic, don’t you think?”

Stan shrugs. “I don’t really know.”

“Speaking of romance,” Richie prompts the transition, “may I kiss you again?”

Stan smirks, “Oh, pulling out the *may* instead of *can*, huh?”

Richie laughs. “Okay, brainiac, may I kiss you or not?”

“Of course.”

Notes for the Chapter:

A lighthearted love confession for you guys because I know there's not too much of that with all the angst after Chapter 2, so I hope you guys like this. I think I'm going to have Stan and Richie get together with Eddie first, then have the relationships merge.

Author's Note:

Please leave comments! I take constructive criticism!

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